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## LADY ABERDEEN'S ADDRESS.

At a Public Meeting, held in the Town Hall, Port Arthur, on Tuesday, Sept. 25, the following address was delivered by Her Excellency, Lady Aberdeen:

Mrs Gibbs and Ladies: I find it difficult to respond appropriately to the very kind words with which Mrs Gibbs has welcomed me; I can only tell you how deeply touched I am by the very genuine sisterly cordiality of her greeting. I can assure you that I feel it to be a very great privilege and honor thus to be allowed to come in contact with the women workers of Port Arthur and Fort William and to be counted by them as a friend and fellow worker. I have already had that privilege in many other cities of Canada, and I feel it to be an inexpressible advantage to be allowed to come into touch with all the manifold works and activities which are being carried out throughout the Dominion, for the welfare of the community at large, and, indeed, I feel it would be more appropriate if I were a listener this afternoon instead of a speaker, for I would like you to tell me as a stranger all that you are carrying on amongst you and thus to give me help and inspiration. I understand, however, that you wish to confer together concerning a movement, which I have the honor of representing, and Mrs Gibbs, and that beautiful society called the Kings Daughters, with whom I claim special sisterhood and membership, were good enough to suggest such a meeting as this and to take in hand its organization, representing all the various societies and churches in Port Arthur, in order that I might have the opportunity of telling you something of this National Council of Women of Canada, which is intended by its authors and promoters to forge, as it were, a golden link uniting all the women workers from ocean to ocean in bonds of sisterhood for the high and holy work which they are called on to undertake by virtue of their common womanhood, and their common responsibilities in this fair country.

I am glad, therefore, to meet you and to respond to this invitation, recognizing how great is the mission

which has been given to the women of Canada—the women of a country which inherits such high traditions from times past and which, as a population possesses all the elements of greatness, and who as a people are God-fearing and law abiding. It is impossible not to recognize what a future must lie before this country if its women can only be found true to those high responsibilities which have been laid upon them; if they build up homes from whence will issue influences which will both sweeten and exalt the whole current of national life and when we look around for a sign as to whether our women are going to be true to their responsibility, both of a private and a public nature, I think we have very much reason for thankfulness and for faith in the future. It has been surprising to those who have organized these women councils, in various centers of populations, when they have come to enquire into the various institutions and societies existing therein to find how many and how varied they are. I have had the pleasure of speaking to the representatives of some of your organizations and I could see that the women of this city are not behind others, and that in all the churches there are various societies for various purposes. I will not go over the various forms of philanthropic, religious, and educational work which exists amongst you, and which, in one form or another has, I doubt not, the sympathy of each one here, even when they cannot personally participate in their efforts.

But let us go back and ask how has this come about? Did it exist 15 years ago? or even 10 or 12 ago? We find that great progress has taken place, during the last few years in women's work and opportunities for good in all the countries of the world, and we can observe this fact in small outlying places, as well as in large cities and centers of population. The fact is, ladies, that women have found out that "union is strength." There used to be a sort of idea that women could not work together. We have heard on all sides that women had some sort of inherent incapacity for working together, but I think that that assertion has been pretty well contradicted of

late, although, still we need a great extension of the principle of co-operation, and those of us who have been workers know how difficult it is to induce others without experience in co-operation to take the first step. The first step taken we soon realize all the advantages which come from loyal help and support and how much the discipline of co-operation assists us in our work and how our own character is developed as we learn to take as well as to give; to accept the will and the decision of those who have most experience and authority amongst us; to carry out loyally the decision of the majority. So this tendency towards co-operation and union has been shown in all the various directions of work, and hence the outcome is all these different societies and auxiliaries, and institutions which are managed by various committees. You here know well the benefits which such organizations have brought to your city. Take the instance of the King's Daughters, or the organization of noble work carried on by the convent of St Joseph. That inclination is daily strengthened. Not only do we find that these societies exist but there is a tendency between those of a kindred character to unite; in fact, I think we realize that the work of the different societies resembles, to a great extent, the work of specialists, in the medical profession. One medical man will take up the study of the eye, another that of the ear, and another that of some other portion of the body; but they all find the necessity of coming together now and again and taking into consideration the care of the general health of the body if success is to be insured. The women workers of the place take up the various forms of work; some for the care of little children, some for the aged and infirm, others for the sick, and again for various reforms, prison reform, rescue and preventive work, and so on. Each of these is everywhere the work of specialists and we know how engrossing such work becomes; how those who are the most eager and enthusiastic in the work become engrossed in the particular line to which they have devoted themselves and thus naturally lose the opportunity of knowing what is going on in other lines of work. But, if we are to carry on our own line of work

successfully, we must of necessity understand the general scope and the general wants of the lives to which we are devoting ourselves. If our work lies, for instance, specially among children we need to think of the various influences which tend to mould the child's life, and which will mould it in the future, as regards body, mind, soul; the different stages of its life. We need therefore to take a wide view to know more than our own particular line of work and so we feel from time to time that we need to come in touch with the general work which is being done by others. I think it is a feeling of this sort that has brought about these Councils for women, or, as they are called in England, Unions of Women Workers. I need not trouble you, I think, with any history as to how the Women's National Council of Canada came into existence. It is pretty well known now that it is practically the outcome of the Women's Congress at Chicago last year, where the women present were urged to form Councils in all their different countries. I will content myself with giving you a short account of its work. The plan has been to form local councils in any given centers of population. These local councils have been formed by various societies and institutions, organizations of all sorts being represented in a central committee. Each society which federates is represented on a central committee by its own president. These form the executive of the Council to which are added a few officers. This central body is then able to carry out whatever is needed to promote the objects of the council. I will read to you the preamble of the National Council which, I think, will give you its aims: "We, women of Canada, sincerely believing that the best good of our homes and nation will be advanced by our own greater unity of thought, sympathy, and purpose, and that an organized movement of women will best conserve the highest good of the Family and the State, do hereby band ourselves together to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law."

I think that preamble really contains the whole gist of the matter. That is greater unity and the furtherance of the Golden Rule in all the relations of life. You will ask how this end is to be ac-

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accomplished. The Executive Committee of which I have spoken in each Council generally arranges from time to time to have some general meeting or conference at which all these societies which join are represented. These give in a short account of their own particular work, and, in addition, a paper or papers are read by ladies who have been invited to discuss some special subject of general interest to the community. You will see that the mere fact of the different reports of work being carried on by many different sections of thought and brought before the public, in itself must tend to this unity of thought, sympathy, and purpose, of which we have been speaking. To begin with, it enables the public to acquire some knowledge of the work that is being done and you will know, ladies, how even in a comparatively small place people are often unaware of what is being done by the different societies and institutions. Surely that, in itself, is a very great benefit. But it is well for us that we should know what is being accomplished; it will draw out our sympathy; it will widen our charity to know of the noble work that is being accomplished by other bodies—bodies against which we may perhaps have had some prejudice; it will deepen our faith if we thereby learn that we can learn from as well as give to them. It is a wonderful lesson to ourselves and it sends us to our homes rejoicing to know how God is working by many and divers means for His own good end. It gives these institutions opportunities for bringing their various needs forward—their needs either for material help or for more workers; or it is the means of drawing into actual work some of the younger women who have not yet found their vocation, but who are stirred up by hearing what it is being done by others. Then it enables to be brought before the public any general need in the city or district—some general want which all citizens of the place are concerned in relieving, and which if they determine together shall be done, will undoubtedly be taken in hand by those who can meet such need. These are, I think, the chief benefits which come to any particular district through the establishment of such a Council. I cannot give you any hard and fast lines on which these Councils shall develop

They are intended to suit the needs of each place where they are set on foot and if the Council has been formed by those who are working—by those who know the people and their needs, then it will doubtless fulfil its objects and will also further the great work of bringing us all nearer together.

These local Councils are represented on the National Council of Canada, which meets once a year in different places in the Dominion. It met last year at Ottawa. The different local councils, eight or nine in number, besides the nationally organized societies, were then represented. Ladies from different places read valuable papers on subjects relating to their special work or on subjects of general interest. These National Councils have been formed not only in Canada and the United States, but in many countries in Europe and are intended to join an International Council which meets every five years, again extending the bond of a common sisterhood in work. You will see that there are vast possibilities in this work. There are doubtless dangers also for we are but human, and when we in this way gather together representatives of all sections of thought we know that there must be dangers, but we believe that this movement towards real unity—this coming to know one another better and to realize this common responsibility which is ours must tend for good both for ourselves individually and for the communities amongst which we live. And if we begin to think of some of the general subjects on which we can unite—some of the subjects in which all women of whatever church or denomination or section of the community may combine, surely there seem to be very many such subjects in which they are all deeply interested. First of all we must place the home. We all here agree that the home is woman's first mission. But what does that involve? Sometimes it is spoken of as if home duties meant a narrow life, a circumscribed life, but if we ask ourselves what home means to each of us—what it should mean to each of us—we shall see that it by no means involves a narrow life. If we ask ourselves each of us to think out what would be the ideal for ourselves, each in our own position in our own home, of what we could do and be, if we could rise to



that ideal of character, and influence, and life, and self-sacrifice, you will at once see how much it means and how much we have to learn. Sometimes people speak as though the power to be home-makers came by instinct to women, but do not we know—we, who are in our homes as wives, mothers, sisters, daughters—that this is by no means the case? Do we not each of us realize our want of training and of knowledge in our contact with other lives, on which so much depends? Cannot we in these general conferences and meetings which are to bring us together as women who are wanting to fulfil their duty in the world? cannot we specially confer together on some of these matters which touch the very inmost springs of our lives? Do we not need to know much more of how to train our children—how to study our children—to understand the different characters of those little ones that have been confided to us? and whom we often damage because we do not understand and enter into the individuality, the different characteristics, of each one and the different training needed to fit them for their work in life? Cannot these subjects bearing upon the relations of parents and children be made? as I trust they will be, most important subjects in your councils? Most valuable papers were read in these topics at the first meeting of Council at Ottawa, and I trust we shall never meet without taking up this subject and endeavoring to help one another to understand what it means to be home-makers in the deepest and broadest sense. And even as regards the bodily wants, the sanitation of our homes, the care of the sick, the prevention of illness, the knowledge of the value of various foods and their preparation, are we all trained as women to know about these things and understand them? All these subjects have a general interest for us and touch us all very nearly. They are subjects which can be discussed with much help and profit and to which each of us doubtless could give our quota of experience.

Again, in speaking of our hopes another subject has been suggested at our Councils, the question of domestic service. It is a subject which is much on the thoughts of women everywhere, not only here but at home. It needs our best thought and essentially it is

one which the women in any country should assist one another to solve. It is too large a subject to enter into at any length now, but it is one of those subjects which will have much light thrown upon it by these Councils and by the coming together of wise, experienced, loving and sympathetic women.

But springing up from these home duties come our social duties, which come to every woman—her duties to society. We sometimes lament the low tone of society, but if there is that low tone anywhere, whose fault is it? Is it not that of the women of the place? And is not a very grave responsibility lying upon us? and especially now in these days when every opportunity is given to women for thorough education and for the use of her influence for the heightening of the whole tone of society. If we see the young people in our midst making pleasure the main object of life, whose fault is that? If there are two standards of morality expected, one for man and the other for woman; one for Sundays and the other for week days; one for religion and the other for business; whose fault is it? Is it not the fault of those who set the tone in the home and in the social life? In these matters also can we not unite in our conferences those of all churches and sections of thought—who desire a lofty standard of morality whether from the secular or religious point of view. Can we not help one another to lift higher the ideal of life? whether in the home or social life, or the life of the country? Does it not depend upon us women, and, especially upon those whom God has called to be mothers, to see that the children grow up with a high ideal of public life, that they should deem it to be a high privilege that they belong to this country, deem it a high honour to be trained to serve their country, anyway, however humble. These matters come home to us mothers although I am not sure that the women of any country have realized the duty incumbent upon them to bring up their children with a distinct idea of serving their country and with a high ideal of what that service means. That brings us again to the further thought of a woman's duty to her country and to mankind at large; to that wider idea of duty to which women are called in these days. The call comes to all of us

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in one way or another. There are few who can shroud themselves in the privacy of their homes without hearing in their hearts the summons to serve their fellow creatures in some way or another. It is a most holy call and a high vocation this call which comes to woman, but we must remember that one of the great essentials for its success is to carry into our work the element of true womanliness and what does that quality involve? How has it been brought into being? Is it not the pressure of home duties and family life that has taught women in a greater or less degree that they must live for others? Is it not a fact that woman must learn this lesson through her children's needs? through the discipline of the home? if she is to rightly perform in any measure her duties as wife, daughter and mother? And it is in that spirit of self-sacrifice that we are called to go forth to the wider work to which women are being called now-a-days, and it is that spirit only, which our Lord has taught us, can regenerate the world.

As Mrs Gibbs has said we are not demanding rights by this Council we are but seeking to help one another to perform our duties in a higher spirit and with a deeper motive than ever before although, indeed, it may lead us to see duties where we never saw them before. But let us never seek to escape the discipline which has sanctified womanhood, but, rather let us glorify in it. Let us make it yield us its full fruits; teaching us to give our very best and our very selves to whatever work for the common good God calls us. Let us always remember our basis the promotion of "the golden rule of love." What more can we require? It can exclude none. It includes all and in all our different Councils we rejoice to know that we have the support and co-operation of all sections; of all the various Protestant denominations; of representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and its institutions. Here I would gratefully acknowledge the help and support given to us by several of the Archbishops and bishops of that church and then again we have our Jewish sisters also with us. We welcome them all. Let them only be united in one common aim—the uplifting of humanity. Whether this is attempted through what we may call

the more secular work of life, or the educational work, or the promotion of that which goes to make life beautiful, the promotion of culture in any way, or the promotion of good and healthy recreation and all physical development—anything of that sort as well as directly philanthropic work—we want them all. We want them all to be drawn together by this beautiful and sacred bond of love.

Ladies, I have striven in a very imperfect way to put before you the objects of this movement. I would like to say that I hope I shall not be understood in any way to be pressing this subject. I only feel it to be my duty to lay before you its objects; the workers of this place must know whether such an organization would be of use to them, and I beg you not to go forward in this matter unless you all, of every denomination, share the feeling that this would be for the common good and would help you to fulfil your high and holy mission. I thank you for listening to me so patiently.

I will now read the constitution recommended by the National Council for Local Councils of Women of Canada:

#### PREAMBLE.

Believing that the more intimate knowledge of one another's work will result in larger mutual sympathy and greater unity of thought, and therefore in more effective action, certain Associations of Women interested in Philanthropy, Religion, Education, Literature, Art, and Social Reform, have determined to organize Local Councils, and to that end join in the following

#### CONSTITUTION.

##### ARTICLE I.—NAME.

This Federation shall be called the Local Council of \_\_\_\_\_ in affiliation with the National Council of Women of Canada.

##### ARTICLE II.—POLICY.

The aim of the Local Council is to bring the various Associations of Women into closer relations through an organized union; but no Society entering a Local Council shall thereby lose its independence in aim or method, or be committed to any principle or method of any other Society in the Council, the object of which is to serve

as a medium of communication and a means of prosecuting any work of common interest.

#### ARTICLE III.—MEMBERS.

Sec. 1. Any Society of Women, the nature of whose work is satisfactory to the Executive Committee of a Local Council, may become members of said Local Council by its own vote.

SEC. II. The women of any organization composed of both men and women may associate themselves by their own vote and join said Local Councils.

#### ARTICLE IV.—OFFICERS

The Officers of a Local Council shall consist of a President, Vice Presidents at large, ex-officio Vice-Presidents (Presidents of all Societies federating in a local Council), a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary and a Treasurer.

These officers shall comprise the Executive Committee, whose business it shall be to control and provide for the general interests of the Council. Five members shall constitute a quorum of this Committee.

#### ARTICLE V.—MEETINGS.

Sec. 1. A Local Council shall hold Annual Meetings for the election of officers and other business.

Sec. 2. The Committee of Arrangements shall consist of the Executive Committee together with one Delegate from each Society belonging to the Council.

Sec. 3. At the Annual Meeting each Society belonging to the Council shall have three votes (exclusive of that cast by the President).

Sec. 4. All other members of any Society belonging to the Council may have the privilege of participating in all discussions that may arise at the Annual Meeting, but may not vote.

Sec. 5. Other meetings of a Local Council may be held from time to time as may best promote the interests of said Council.

Sec. 6. All new business to be brought before the Annual Meeting of a Local Council must first be submitted to the Executive Committee as notice of motion.

#### ARTICLE VI.—FEES.

Each Society federating in a Local Council shall pay an annual fee of \$ towards the expense fund of the said Council.

#### ARTICLE VII.—PATRONS.

Sec. 1. Any person whose name is acceptable to the Executive Committee may become a Patron of a Local Council upon the payment of \$5.00 annually, or \$50.00 at one time.

Sec. 3.—The names of Patrons shall be placed after those of the Executive Committee on all printed documents.

Sec. 3.—Any person whose name is acceptable to the Executive Committee, and who is not connected with any affiliated Society, may become a Member of the Local Council on payment of \$1 annually, and may take part in the proceedings and discussions of the public meetings of the Council, but is not entitled to a vote. Such members shall receive free all literature published by the Council.

#### ARTICLE VIII.—AMENDMENTS.

This constitution may be altered or amended by a two-third vote of a Local Council at any annual meeting, provided that such alteration be in harmony with the constitution of the National Council, notice of the proposed change having been sent to the Executive of the National Council two months, and to each Society belonging to the Council at least on month prior to such meeting.

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